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ENDANGERED SPECIES:

Army Corps downsizes bird cull aimed at saving salmon

Published: Monday, February 9, 2015

The Army Corps of Engineers last week reduced by 5,000 the number of double-crested cormorants to be killed to protect endangered salmon at the mouth of the Columbia River.

The final environmental impact statement detailed plans to shoot nearly 11,000 double-crested cormorants by 2018 and pour oil over 26,000 nests to eliminate hatchlings.

The revised plan aims to shrink the cormorant population on East Sand Island from about 13,000 pairs to 5,600 because the birds devour an estimated 11 million fish a year, including nearly 7 percent of all juvenile steelhead headed out to sea.

Cormorants flourished on the flat, sandy island after dredging created ideal nesting conditions ([Greenwire](#), Aug. 4).

The corps settled on shooting the birds as the preferred reduction method, but nearly all of the more than 152,000 public comments expressed disapproval of the plan.

"I can't believe in this day and age we can't come up with an alternative solution to killing things," said Oregon resident Tommy Huntington. "You have to kill one to save the other one? It doesn't make any sense" (Kelly House, [Portland Oregonian](#), Feb. 6). -- DTB

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